Lesson 57 - Weaning The Infant; Feeding Children

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- Article #1: Feeding Your Child From Two to Three Years By Paula Duvall

1. Introduction

Throughout history and in most cultures women never thought to stop nursing their babies until they are *both* emotionally and physiologically ready. It was natural (and still is) for a child to be nursed at least two or three years—until all their teeth have developed.

Until the advent of modern technology (bottles, blenders, baby food grinders, etc.) babies before about the age of two or so were fed only mother's milk. No other food was necessary nor was it available. Baby was unable to chew foods without teeth and mother had not the tools to make the food pureed.

In recent years doctors have advised mothers to feed solid foods to their babies younger and younger. They have told these mothers that their milk is inadequate and babies will have nutritional deficiencies if they don't stop nursing immediately and start feeding abominations as pureed meats and vegetables (cooked); cooked, enriched cereals; cooked, pureed fruits; etc. Mothers followed this advice and ended up with insecure, overweight, dyspeptic, and sickly babies.

But now, amongst more educated women, the trend is going back toward the natural way of raising our children. Women nurse their children for longer periods and wait until the physiological signs (teeth) and emotional signs (willingness to give up the breast) occur before totally weaning their babies.

In the last lesson I covered feeding baby as well as nursing before actual weaning. Now I will discuss totally weaning the baby from the breast, how to do it, why to do it, as well as feeding a child once it is totally weaned.

2. Weaning

In his book, *Hygienic Care of Children*, Dr. Herbert M. Shelton said, "Weaning should be gradual, as we see it in nature, beginning at the age of two and lasting at least until the third birthday." If weaning is abrupt, it is no longer natural as no other creatures who suckle their young would suddenly cut them off. Babies need time to adjust to new foods as well as to emotionally adjust to not having the close physical contact with their mothers any longer. Also, women's breasts would become swollen and sore if they abruptly stopped nursing—they would become filled with the milk that was meant for their babies. Another problem with sudden weaning is that the natural child-spacing effect breast-feeding creates

would be halted.

In the book *The Womanly Art of Breast-Feeding* by the La Leche League, the philosophy of weaning is to let the baby do it—let him nurse until he wants to stop. A mother should be sensitive to the specific needs of her baby and not follow the rigid guidelines of any book. Just as some babies get their first tooth at only five months old and others not until they're well over a year old, some are ready to wean at younger ages then others.

2.1 Should Baby Be Weaned?

This is a question asked by Dr. Shelton in his book, *Hygienic Care of Children*. He discusses the various reasons women have for weaning their children. He claims that most of the reasons are invalid and that babies need not be weaned at all until they are ready to. In other words, when the baby is six or nine months old or even a year old, he or she is most likely not ready to be weaned and should not be if superior growth and development is desired.

2.2 When to Wean

Naturally there is no specific date to wean your child. As I mentioned earlier, each individual child has its own needs and each grows and matures at different rates. You need not decide in advance when to wean. For example, most mothers when asked how long they plan to nurse their babies have an exact age in mind. Usually this date ends up passing and the baby is still nursing. The mother then wonders where she went wrong. I had planned to nurse my two sons for only two years and each one went months past that date. In fact, they would have nursed much longer if I had let them. Planning a time when baby and you will be ready is incorrect and may lead to disappointment or abrupt weaning. Let nature judge when the time is right.

But how will I know how to read nature's signs? When the time comes, your baby will let you know. This may be quite a bit later than you anticipated so you may wonder if there will ever be signs to know when to wean. But if you're patient, they will come. He/she will show an interest in food and this interest will gradually increase with his/her needs.

There is in our western culture an unacceptance of children nursing for two or three or perhaps four years. If you're out in public and your toddler expresses an interest in nursing and you nurse him, people may show disapproval in their facial expressions and comments. Ignore them if possible. Your breast-feeding relationship with your child is based upon your mutual needs and the opinions of others are not as important as you and your child's welfare.

In other cultures where lengthy breast-feeding is acceptable and weaning is done in a relaxed way children grow up to be gentle and agreeable and more well-adjusted. People may suggest that your baby will be too dependent if you nurse him too long but just the opposite appears to be so. La Leche League has shown that "little ones who have been allowed to grow out of nursing gradually and at their own pace, without anxiety or prematurity on the part of the mother, are happier, *more* independent little people."

Dr. C. E. Page in his book *How to Feed the Baby* explained that if a breast-feeding mother had fed her baby properly of breast milk, there would be little problem with weaning. He says, "They are virtually weaned already; for not being excessively, or too frequently, fed, the appetite will be sufficiently healthy to accept needed food whenever, and however presented."

In choosing the proper time to wean Dr. Page also says: "There are good grounds for preferring the cooler months of the year for weaning from the breast, and in general I would recommend an observance of this rule, though I do not hesitate to say this is less vitally important under the system herein recommended ..." Dr. Page did not give any specific reasons for this, however.

Many people in this country still recommend early weaning from the breast. In the book, *The Complete*

Book of Breast-Feeding, it is said, "At six months of age, the baby in a modern industrialized society can meet his nutritional needs through cow's milk and a wide variety of solid foods. ... After nine months, a nursing mother usually produces less milk and her let-down reflex takes longer to operate. ... at about nine months of age, when a baby can crawl around after food, has several teeth to chew it with and has the intestinal maturity to handle a diversity of foodstuffs." This is not good advice.

First of all, most babies (and adults) cannot properly handle cow's milk because they lack the enzymes to digest it properly and it is naturally for calves—not people. Second of all, nursing mothers naturally produce more milk as their babies needs increase. I, for one, produced just as much milk for my babies well past their second birthdays. Nursing is a supply-and-demand mechanism and, if you nurse regularly, and eat right of course, there will be, plenty of milk for your baby. It's when you start feeding your baby more and more solid foods that your milk production slows down.

Another falsity of this statement is that babies do not "crawl around after food." It is true that they put many things in their mouths but not necessarily for nourishment. This is their way of exploring various objects they come into contact with.

Having several teeth does not allow the baby to chew things very well either. Most of their food would have to be pureed in order for them not to choke on it. This, in itself, is unnatural. (Certain foods, however, do not require much chewing, such as watermelon which when the seeds are removed baby can merely squash with his/her gums and swallow.) Babies at nine months of age do not have the "intestinal maturity to handle a diversity of foodstuffs." Why do you think so many babies have "allergies" to so many fine foods at this time? They are not ready for them, that's why.

Basically, good advice as to when to stop nursing your baby completely is when he/she has all teeth and seems to enjoy the foods (preferably fruits) given. If the foods he/she eats, digest without causing the baby any discomfort, then baby is ready and nursing can be replaced with foods—gradually of course.

2.3 Why to Wean

The foremost reason to wean is because baby is ready for solid foods. He indicates an interest in foods and exhibits an ability to handle them. Gradually the child comes to ignore mother's milk.

As mentioned earlier, some women feel the need to wean because of social pressures. A child may be weaned from the breast prematurely and still have the need to suck. Therefore a bottle may be given. But is it any worse for a toddler to be nursing at the breast than it is for him to be running around with a bottle hanging out of his mouth?

If baby is going through emotional adjustments, such as a major move of the family, divorce of his/her parents, etc., it is best not to wean. He/she needs time to adjust to one new situation before being confronted with another.

Other reasons to wean are justified. For instance, if the mother has an acute or chronic disease that may impair the quality of her milk, it is best to feed whole, natural foods than to continue nursing.

If you should become pregnant again, immediate weaning is unnecessary. This is usually advised because it is too much of a drain on the mother to nourish two others besides herself. But, if mother is eating whole, natural foods and taking care of her other basic needs, she should have no difficulty in nursing well into the pregnancy. You can begin weaning early in the pregnancy so that by the time the second baby is born the first one will be completely weaned from the breast.

To sum up this section: baby needs to be weaned from the breast because he/she needs outside sources to obtain nutritional needs. The child needs to make gradual adaptations to these physiological changes. The only other reasons to wean are abnormal as mentioned above.

2.4 Methods of Weaning

Again, do not abruptly wean. Gradually wean baby from the breast. But how, you say?

Eliminate one breast-feeding at a time and replace with a serving of fruits—fresh, ripe, and raw and in a form that baby can properly handle. For example: say baby normally has four breast-feedings a day—one in the early morning upon arising, one in late morning, one in mid-afternoon, and one in the evening. Eliminate the late morning nursing and serve him/her some sliced bananas, a piece of deseeded watermelon, or some other fresh fruit in season. Stick to this schedule for at least a week or two.

Then eliminate the mid-afternoon feeding and replace it with a solid food. Stick with this schedule for a long enough period for baby to adjust to it. Remember not to introduce too many different foods to baby too quickly. Variety is not necessary. If he/she is truly hungry, the mono-meal of the same fruit each day will be relished and he/she will have time to adjust to the new food before another is tried.

It is important to remember not to refuse the breast during these early replacement feedings. Just don't offer it. Baby may fuss and refuse the foods offered. Try skipping this feeding—no food or breast milk.

If this seems too traumatic for baby, perhaps he/she is not ready to give up this breast-feeding. Try again at a later date.

A hint in deciding which feeding to eliminate first is to watch your baby and see which one is least interesting to him/her. Eliminate this one first. Continue, gradually, in this manner until he/she is completely weaned.

Be flexible in your weaning. If it seems to upset baby too much, wait a while. Also remember never be abrupt about it. This can cause psychological problems in your baby and also discomfort for you from milk pressure in your breasts.

La Leche League adds: "You will find that if you devote your attention to your baby-child not only when he is nursing but in other ways as well, his demand to be nursed lessens. ... Even an eighteen-month-old enjoys being read to or just talked to, not in an absent-minded, distracted way while you are preoccupied with other things, but with your whole attention centered on him." This is good advice. Distraction works with many things as well as weaning in raising your children.

3. Feeding Children

This period of feeding children after breast-feeding is one of the biggest changes in infancy. It is the mother's responsibility to see to it that the child is properly nourished and develops good eating habits. Before this time, it was easy—all mother had to do was put her baby to the breast. Now she has to provide the proper foods at the right times so that baby can make best use of them and be healthy.

3.1 When Is Baby Ready to Eat Solid Foods?

As mentioned in the earlier parts of this lesson, when baby has all the physiological tools necessary to chew and digest foods properly, he is ready for food. He is also ready when he shows an interest in foods and a disinterest in breast milk. Baby, when gradually introduced to new foods, will eventually be completely off breast milk and have a regular diet just like the rest of the family.

Many books on the subject of infant feeding will tell you how to feed your infant solid foods and what foods to feed them and in what form, "infants," however, do not need anything other than breast milk.

When baby is ready, there will be no need to spoon-feed him/her. This is clumsy and messy because baby is not really ready for it. In fact, most of the conglomerations or purees, cereals, etc., end up spit out by the baby because his/her senses have rejected them.

In *The Complete Book of Breast-Feeding* it is said that "an easy way to provide a balanced diet is to take advantage of the many strained baby foods on your grocer's shelves. These are prepared under strict Hygienic conditions and are extremely convenient to use." This is pernicious advice.

First of all, I wonder if the author visited the factories at which these "foods" are prepared to prove they are prepared under "hygienic conditions." Secondly, these foods are generally unfit for the human diet. As well they are cooked with sugar, salt, and preservatives added to enhance flavor that was taken away by the cooking process. If baby has to be fed his food on a spoon by his mother, then he is not ready for solid foods. When he is ready, he will be able to hold a food in his hands and chew it. These foods are often called finger foods. Give your child a piece of banana or some other raw fruit and see if he can handle it or if he merely plays with it or throws it on the floor. This will determine readiness.

If baby is prematurely introduced to solid foods, overfeeding can be the result. He is only used to sucking. The mechanical motions of chewing food are much different and require a period of adjustment or changeover.

Food "allergies" are not so much the result of the food not being right for that particular baby's constitution as they are the result of introducing foods too early. Baby is not allergic to the food but instead does not have the digestive enzymes to sufficiently break down the foods being given. Therefore, he/she naturally rejects it. Wait—do not force food on your baby when you think he/she is ready. He/she will let you know.

3.2 Baby's First Food

What should baby's first food be? Experiment. Some babies love bananas, some watermelon, some peaches, etc. Try one fruit at a time but never more than one at a time. Once you find a fruit your baby enjoys, stick with it for a long enough period for your baby to get used to it. Also give only small amounts at first.

Never be in a hurry to try new foods. If he sees you eat something and seems interested, let him try it (provided it is wholesome). Fruits are naturally the best first food for baby as humans are natural frugivores. The baby is already used to the sweetness of mother's milk and will accept fruits before vegetables. In fact, it is a rare child indeed that even enjoys vegetables. Their taste for vegetables has to be "cultivated."

You need not worry about deficiencies if your child won't eat vegetables at first. Once he is used to a wide variety of fruits, serve him these, one at a time, and he will get a variety of nutrients.

You can add vegetables later. Many children like carrot juice as it is sweet—try this. But not too soon, as carrots are starchy vegetables and children before the age of about two do not have the physiological tools necessary to digest starches. Starch merely ferments inside them and causes indigestion and discomfort. Stick to foods that are easy for him/her to digest—namely fruits.

As the child gets older, about five or so, you can add nuts and seeds. Before this it is difficult for baby to properly masticate nuts and, therefore, they're difficult to digest. Wait on these. The article in this lesson, "Feeding Your Child From Two to Three Years," is very helpful in suggesting particular menus.

3.3 Developing Good Eating Habits

Good eating habits are the most important aspect of diet. If a child learns these when young, they will carry over into adulthood. Good eating habits begin with breastfeeding which is totally up to the mother. She needs to breast-feed him only when he is hungry and only in the proper amounts necessary to

sustain him. A fat baby is a sign that poor eating habits are already being established.

Many parents try very hard to feed their children right at home but have a difficult time getting others to accept their rules of feeding their children. For example: some mothers might send their children to their grandparents' house for the weekend and grandma feels they're being deprived by not being allowed to have candy. She gives them candy, cookies, cakes, etc., to supply this "deprivation" and gets them hooked on these. She is not respecting her daughter's or son's wishes to raise a healthy, well-developed child. Perhaps it would be best to allow your children to be with their grandparents only when you are there. Of course, it is impossible to protect your children from all the evils ("foods") that are about (and screaming out at them through the media) in this society, but if you teach them good habits and why they need to eat right and if they respect you, they will follow your rules. (See Lesson Fifty-nine on "Teaching Your Children About Healthful Living.")

There are some rules to follow to assure your child is getting good nourishment:

1. Never add salt, sugar, honey, etc., to any of their foods.
2. Only feed natural, uncooked, unprocessed foods to your child.
3. Teach them not to drink with their meals. On a proper diet they will not want to anyway.
4. Teach them how to properly combine their meals for best digestion if more than a single food is served.
5. Feed only three meals a day, and don't allow them to eat between meals.
6. Show them how to chew their food well.
7. Have only natural foods in the house so they will not be tempted by others.
8. Keep meals simple—don't combine too many things at once.
9. Do not stuff your child—feed only moderate amounts of food.
   A child usually refuses natural foods when he/she has had enough.
10. Provide a calm, relaxing environment for him/her to eat meals in.
11. Teach him/her to sit and relax while eating.
12. And most importantly, show a good example. If you're eating all sorts of wrong foods, it will be very difficult to teach your child otherwise. That is cruelly hypocritical!

Dr. Tilden has said, "Fit children to the food and never attempt to fit the food to the children." This means that a child must learn good eating habits by your example and words. If a child does not like a certain food, do not force him/her to eat it. There are plenty of good foods available and missing one particular item of food in his/her diet will certainly not create any sort of deficiency. Never force your child to eat anything.

4. Conclusion

Now you know that weaning your child from the breast should be a positive and gradual experience for you and your baby. He or she will be more well-adjusted and more likely to learn good eating habits. The best time to wean is when your child is ready. He/she will let you know when that time comes—you merely have to be observant. A full mouth of teeth is a good indication that whole foods are needed and that by now your milk supply is probably lessening. Experiment with fresh fruits and keep them simple—monotrophic. Follow the rules for good eating habits and you should have a happy, healthy child.

5. Questions & Answers

My child is already two years of age and does not seem interested in food at all. He is very thin and his front teeth are brown and pitted and all he wants is breast milk. I feel he has a deficiency of some sort because of his teeth but he won't eat. What can I do?

> Try improving your diet. Watch what you eat. Eat fewer empty foods and more whole, fresh fruits, vegetables, nuts, and seeds—all raw. Try to remain relaxed and poised as much as possible as stress can deteriorate the quality of your milk.
>
> It is unusual for a child of your son's age to not be interested in food, but believe me, he will eventually be and when he is, you may not be able to turn off his appetite. Don't worry. Nature has it all worked out. Just do your part.

My child is 18 months old and I no longer enjoy nursing him. I feel like I should continue to do so but I don't want to. Would it be right to wean him so young?

> It is better to wean him at this time than to nurse him out of guilt. He can pick up on your feelings and this could affect him psychologically. It is best to nurse him longer, however, in your case to gradually—and gently—wean him would be acceptable and perhaps the best thing to do. Use the methods for weaning that I've described in this lesson and you should have no problems.

My child is one year old and I've recently introduced her to solid foods. I started with bananas and she loves these. She seems to have no difficulty digesting bananas but her stools are very sticky and harder than before. Does this mean she's not digesting the bananas thoroughly?

> No. Her body needs time to totally adjust to the eating of foods. All she ever had is mother's milk and bananas are new to her—anything that's new requires time to adjust to. Her stools are naturally going to be of a different consistency than when taking only breast milk. Her stools will probably never look like that again. However, they will be less sticky and softer when her body has accommodated to eating foods not as liquid as milk.

I have a six-year-old son who just won't stick to only natural foods. He's influenced by the other kids at his school and they all eat what's advertised on T.V. What can I do?

> The best you can do is to provide him with the best of foods at home and show him a good example by keeping good eating habits yourself. Try to expose him to other children that are being raised Hygienically and don't allow him to watch so much (if any) commercial television. Give him positive reasons why he should eat good nourishing foods.

Article #1: Feeding Your Child From Two to Three Years by Paula Duvall

When your baby is two years old, you can start feeding it whole fresh fruits and vegetables, in addition to breast milk. This transition period can be a difficult time, and I would like to share with you my

experiences that I have had with our two children.

First, let's review some very important rules to follow that are covered in Dr. Shelton's book, *The Hygienic Care of Children*. It is important for you to understand that you cannot decide what food you would like your children to have; you must feed them foods that agree with them and keep them healthy. Some important basic rules, including food combining rules which are covered in Dr. Shelton's book, are worth repeating:

1. Feed the child natural, that is uncooked, unprocessed, unsterilized, unadulterated, undrugged foods.
2. Do not stuff the child. Feed it three moderate meals a day.
3. Feed simple meals. Do not feed foods that are mixed in such a way as to cause fermentation.
4. Do not feed between meals, nor at night.
5. If the child is upset, or feels bad, or is excited or tired, or overheated or chilled, or in pain or distress, or is sick, don't feed it; if there is fever, give no food.
6. Do not feed the child cooked fruit.

And here are the food combining rules:

1. Do not feed acid fruits and starch foods together.
2. Do not feed acids with proteins.
3. Do not feed sweet fruits and acid (sour) fruits together.
4. Do not feed sugars or starches with protein foods.
5. Do not feed sweet foods with starch foods.
6. Feed only one protein at a time.
7. Feed fresh milk alone.
8. Feed plenty of green vegetables with both starches and proteins.
9. Do not feed butter, oil or other fats with protein foods.

Both my children were nursed; one until the age of two, and the other for only one year. Therefore, neither child was on breast milk during the transition feeding period at two to three years old.

The schedule that your child is on around the age of two, if fed Hygienically is milk, juice, milk, juice, milk. To start the transition to adult foods, the first juice feeding in the morning can be dropped, and the child can be given fresh, whole fruits combined well. At first, I gave my children only one kind of fruit. Now I give them only two kinds of fruit at one meal.

You may have started your child on this morning fruit feeding earlier than at two years of age. The fruits that my children digested well before two years of age were blueberries, any kind of melon, papaya, pears, oranges, grapefruit, mangoes, fresh figs, apricots, and plums. They also digested well any other berry fruit, like strawberries, raspberries, and any other wild berry. Here in Ogden Dunes, Indiana, we have a lot of wild berries growing, and our family has a fun outing looking for these and picking them. We always go berry picking around ten in the morning, so the children can eat their meal right from the bush or tree. You can't expect to take children berry picking without them eating the delicious fruit!

Fruits that my children did not digest at first were apples, bananas, cherries, grapes, and the sweet dried fruits. Both children had problems digesting bananas and apples in their early years. I did not feed them cherries because of the pit, and I did not feed them grapes because of the seeds. (The "peel" around grapes is not chewed well enough by a toddler and usually comes out whole in their stools.) Even if the grapes were seedless, for some reason the children did not digest them well in their early years. Now, of course, my five-year-old Jacquie digests all of these fruits very well. But I still stay away from the concentrated sweet dried fruits, such as raisins, dates, dried figs, and prunes. If there is fresh fruit at the market, which is usually true most of the year, I but it in preference to the dried fruit.

The best way to tell whether your child is digesting a food is to check its stools. If chunks of the food are coming out, then you know the child is not digesting that particular food, or is not chewing it well.

When your child is between the ages of one and two, I feel you can try it on the pulpy fruits. If the child does not do well with them, then put it back on the juice. When I first introduced fruit to my children, I introduced one fruit at a time. I found it was better if I gave them two oranges rather than two kinds of fruit at the same time. Papaya is quite a rich fruit, and one half of one is enough for any child. The overfeeding of fruit will cause digestive problems of protein foods. I also discovered that if I overfed my children fruit, they would break out in skin eruptions. I fed the fruit to my children between 10 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. It always depended on their waking hour. My son, Donny, awakes at 7:30 or 8:00 a.m. so I do not feed him the fruit meal until 11:00 a.m.

Now that Donny is over two, I give him a more substantial lunch at 11:00 or 11:30 a.m. and totally skip the noon milk feeding. When a more complete lunch is given the milk is not needed and, if fed after such a large lunch, can cause health problems. Here are some suggested larger lunch meals:

two oranges (small)	pears
kale	peaches
celery	celery
avocado	swiss chard
2 fresh figs	blueberries (1 good-sized bowl)
celery	celery
romaine lettuce	bibb lettuce
apricots	
mangoes	papayas
celery	celery
red-leaf lettuce	broccli leaves and stems

At 1:30 or 2:00 p.m. both children nap. My five-year-old daughter is the only among her friends, who still takes a nap. I have seen the other children in the afternoon, and they are tired too. But they cannot lie down and rest peacefully because of poor diet consisting of meats, starches, and sugared products. And those poor moms have a long day with their children, with no time to rest themselves. My children and I rest every day—the children nap for two hours. And it is a wonderful break in the day for me. These other mothers must be exhausted tending their children all day. I talked to one mother whose son is only three years old. He gets up at 6:00 a.m., does not nap, and goes to bed at 8:00 in the evening. Of course, when the child gets fussy, he is fed, and this makes it impossible for him to even rest because his digestive system is constantly overworking. By the way, this child has already had some serious health problems—such as constant cold and bronchial pneumonia last year.

When my children awake around 4 o'clock, I feed them a vegetable dinner. When you make the transition diet, use only raw foods. My children did better on raw foods. They eat less, chew better, and it lasts longer. They seem to overeat on the cooked foods and swallow without masticating properly. Cooked broccoli will slide down a lot easier than when it's raw. Also, the child may develop digestive

problems from overeating cooked food. I found that cooked food came out undigested more often than the raw food.

It is good to try nuts. Pine nuts are very easily digested. They are the softest nut I have found, and the children do very well with them. Raw cashews were difficult for my children to digest. My children also do well with pecans and walnuts. Almonds are quite hard and not as easy for them to chew. Of course, my five-year-old now can digest almonds. Here are some suggested vegetable meals:

cucumber	cucumber
celery	celery
tomato	tomato
string beans	green pepper
red pepper	kale
nuts	avocado
cucumber	cucumber
celery	celery
carrot	green pepper
kale	romaine lettuce
coconut	baked squash
cucumber	
celery	
red pepper	
cauliflower	

A nice starch meal can be given in the evening, as you can see, with baked squash. We use yams, Irish potatoes, and squash.

If you find that the child is starting to get sick, put it back on the juice schedule or a fast until it's back to normal. If the child gets sick from overeating or from experimenting with the diet, then of course you will have to fast it. Short fasts should be sufficient for any child who has been reared Hygienically.

The dividends are high when you bring up your children this way. They are healthy, happy, alert,

beautiful to look at, and certainly your home life is less stressful because your children are not fussy and constantly crying. Do not cheat from this diet. You and your child will pay the price. Stick to the schedule. You can do anything you want around a well-organized schedule.